

VZCZCXRO8523  
OO RUEHBC RUEHDE RUEHGI RUEHKUK RUEHMA RUEHROV  
DE RUEHKH #0002 0020613  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
O 020613Z JAN 09  
FM AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2623  
INFO RUCNFUR/DARFUR COLLECTIVE  
RUEHEE/ARAB LEAGUE COLLECTIVE  
RHMFISS/CJTF HOA

UNCLAS KHARTOUM 000002

DEPT FOR AF/PDPA  
ADDIS ABABA FOR USAU

SENSITIVE  
SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [ASEC](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KPKO](#) [SOCI](#) [AU](#) [UNSC](#) [SU](#)  
SUBJECT: EDITOR-IN-CHIEF OF PRO-GOVERNMENT DAILY CONTENTS U.S.  
STANCE ON GAZA IS AIDING SPREAD OF TERRORISM

REF KHARTOUM 1842

¶1. (SBU) Summary: On December 30, 2008, the Public Affairs Officer and Information Assistant visited, "Sudan Vision" Editor-in-Chief and former International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP) participant Saif Adeen Elbashir Ahmed Hassan. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss an upcoming PAS program on federalism in the United States. The meeting coincided with the second day of student demonstrations outside the U.S. and Egyptian embassies to protest the Israeli air-strikes in Gaza (reftel). Focusing on the latter, Ahmed voiced what he said was his and the region's disappointment with the U.S. stance on the situation in Gaza. He also called on the U.S. to take a more active role in the Darfur peace process. End Summary.

¶2. (SBU) Despite his newspaper's role as a mouth-piece for regime policies, Ahmed claims to be a "moderate." As such, he told the PAO that "the U.S. has fallen way below the expectations of the people in the region and in Sudan in adopting its current stance on the Israeli offensive in Gaza." He pointed out that he regards the U.S. as unequalled in fields as diverse as trade and humanitarian assistance. Nevertheless, Ahmed claimed the failure of the Department of State to call upon Israel to stop "its offensive immediately" was harming the credibility of the U.S. in convincing other nations to cooperate in countering terrorism worldwide. "Even moderate countries, such as Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Jordan, feel that in not asking Israel to halt the offensives immediately, the U.S. is failing its own position and that of the United Nations." Ahmed contended that the U.S. "is aiding the spread of terrorism worldwide," and that there is "a deepening rift developing between the U.S. and the Arab world."

¶3. (SBU) Sudan Vision's Editor-in-Chief then shifted to the situation in Darfur. He asked rhetorically how the U.S. had been able to get the North and South to sign off on the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in Naivasha, but could not do the same in bringing the warring Darfur parties to the peace table. He said: "If the U.S. calls (Darfur rebel leader) Abdul Wahid Al-Nur to the table of negotiations, he will come unconditionally. France cannot do that." He continued: "There is a desire in Sudan for the U.S. to make a serious contribution to the power process in Darfur."

¶4. (SBU) Ahmed contended that the "international powers" are "not in a hurry to achieve peace in Darfur. They will just fix their interests, and then launch accusations against the Sudanese government, the janjaweed and the militias." Ahmed added that "As long as the U.S. distances itself from becoming directly involved in the peace negotiations and preparations for Darfur, no one accepts that there will be any success." Ahmed's concluded by saying: "Don't fail us or fall below our standards for you. People see that Sudan can benefit from a good relationship with the United States."

¶5. (U) Bio note: Ahmed was on the March-April 2006 NEA Foreign

Policy Decision-Making Process IVLP tour, and has been the Editor-in-Chief of this pro-government English-language local daily since its establishment in 2003. He entered the field of journalism in 1993 as an international affairs reporter, and has also worked as a foreign correspondent for two Doha-based newspapers. The funding for "Sudan Vision" comes from pro-government private companies.

16. (SBU) Comment: Ahmed's theme is a frequent one for many Sudanese, especially among the political elite. It is easier for them to focus on the widely reported suffering in Gaza (or Iraq) than on suffering caused by their own ruling government on their own people. The idea that the "U.S. could solve Darfur" is a popular one as well as it absolves local actors from all responsibility or urgency to do so themselves. End comment.

FERNANDEZ